

**TRAVEL ALERT**  
**June 6, 2012**

*THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES IS TRANSMITTING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AS A PUBLIC SERVICE TO U.S. CITIZENS IN THE PHILIPPINES. PLEASE DISSEMINATE THIS MESSAGE TO ALL U.S. CITIZENS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION OR NEIGHBORHOOD.*

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**HURRICANE AND TYPHOON SEASON 2012**

The Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the hurricane and typhoon seasons in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recommends that those in hurricane- and typhoon- prone regions begin preparations for the upcoming seasons now. This Travel Alert expires on December 1, 2012.

The Atlantic Basin, including the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico: Hurricane season begins June 1 and ends November 30. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center expects to see a near-normal hurricane season in the Atlantic Basin this year with a 70 percent chance of nine to fifteen named storms, including four to eight that will reach hurricane strength (with top winds of 74 mph or higher). Of those, one to three will become major hurricanes (with top winds of 111 mph or higher, ranking Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale).

The Eastern Pacific: Hurricane season began May 15 and ends November 30. NOAA predicts a near-normal hurricane season in the Eastern Pacific this year with a 70 percent chance of 12 to 18 named storms, including five to nine that will reach hurricane strength. Of those, two to five are expected to become major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale).

Western and Central Pacific: Typhoon season begins June 1 and ends November 30. NOAA's Central Pacific Hurricane Center (CPHC) predicts a 50 percent chance that activity during the 2012 season will be below normal in the Central Pacific basin. Each season the West and Central Pacific region averages 31 typhoons, about half of which have the potential to cause severe destruction. For information on typhoon warnings, please consult the Joint Typhoon Warning Center in Honolulu, the National Weather Service's Central Pacific Hurricane Center, and the Regional Specialized Meteorological Center (RSMC) Tokyo - Typhoon Center.

In the aftermath of some previous storms, U.S. citizens traveling abroad encountered uncomfortable and often dangerous conditions that lasted for several days while they waited for transportation back to the United States. In the past, many U.S. citizens were forced to delay travel due to infrastructure damage to airports and limited flight availability. Roads were also washed out or obstructed by debris, adversely affecting access to airports and land routes out of affected areas. In many places, storms often are accompanied by damaging high tides and flooding. If you are living close to the ocean or other bodies of water, you may be at higher risk of flooding. Landslides and mudslides also are serious concerns during heavy rains. Reports of looting and sporadic violence in the aftermath of natural disasters are not uncommon. Security personnel may not be readily available to assist. In the event of a storm, travelers should be

aware that they may not be able to depart the affected area for 24-48 hours or longer.

If a situation requires an evacuation from an overseas location, the Department of State will work with commercial airlines to ensure that U.S. citizens are repatriated as safely and efficiently as possible. Commercial airlines are the Department's primary source of transportation in an evacuation; other means of transport are utilized only as a last resort. The Department of State does not provide no-cost transportation, but has the authority to provide repatriation loans to those in financial need. We recommend that you obtain travel insurance to cover unexpected expenses during an emergency.

If you live in or are traveling to storm-prone regions, prepare for hurricanes, typhoons, and other tropical storms by organizing a kit in a waterproof container that includes a supply of bottled water, non-perishable food items, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, and vital documents (especially your passport and other identification). Emergency shelters often provide only very basic resources and may have limited medical and food supplies.

Monitor local radio and other media, and the National Weather Service to be aware of weather developments. Minor tropical storms can develop into hurricanes or typhoons very quickly, limiting the time available for a safe evacuation. Inform family and friends of your whereabouts and remain in close contact with your tour operator, hotel staff, transportation providers (airlines, cruise lines, etc.), and local officials for evacuation instructions during a weather emergency.

We strongly encourage U.S. citizens to enroll with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) website. By enrolling, you will receive the Embassy's most recent security and safety updates during your trip.

Enrollment also ensures that you can be reached during an emergency. While we will do our utmost to assist you in a crisis, be aware that local authorities bear primary responsibility for the welfare of people living or traveling in their jurisdictions.

Additional information on hurricanes and storm preparedness can be found on the Department's "Hurricane Season - Know Before You Go" webpage. You can get updated information on travel to your destination from the Department of State by calling 1-888-407-4747 within the United States and Canada or, from outside the United States and Canada, 1-202-501-4444.

We also encourage you to check the Country Specific Information Sheet and the Internet site of the U.S. embassy or consulate with consular responsibilities for the country you will be visiting. Follow us on Twitter and become a fan of the Bureau of Consular Affairs' page on Facebook as well.